

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
Date:	18 January 2018
Subject:	Building Communities of Specialist Provision: A Collaborative Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND in Lincolnshire

Summary:

The attached strategy outlines the proposed vision for specialist education provision for pupils with SEND in Lincolnshire. It proposes significant change in the way special schools provide education to all pupils with SEND and seeks to address some of the challenges faced by pupils and their families, including long distance travel to access school and feelings of isolation and segregation from their local communities.

This strategy and the proposed model within has been approved for consultation by Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee. Public consultation for this strategy commenced on Monday 8th January 2018.

The purpose of this report is to update all members of Schools Forum with the details of the strategy and proposed model.

Recommendation(s):

Lincolnshire Schools Forum is asked to note the content of the report.

Background

Local

Since the introduction of the SEND Code of Practice in 2014, and following national trends, Lincolnshire has seen a significant increase in the number of pupils identified with SEND, with increasing numbers seeking a place at a special school.

This high demand for special school places means that, based on school premises size, many Lincolnshire special schools have significant capacity pressures. Along with capacity challenges, the current education system has special schools operating within clearly defined designations. This means that pupils are taught in

special schools which can only meet the needs of their specific designation e.g. autism specific or physical disability/profound and multiple learning difficulty specific. As a consequence, many pupils have to travel for significantly long periods and distances in order to access special school places, where their needs can be met and there is capacity.

Research commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) conducted by the ISOS Partnership (2015/16), identified the need to "reshape" SEND provision to meet the needs of the increasing population of pupils requiring placement in special school settings. It also highlighted the need for more collaborative working between special and mainstream schools and lends its support for an "All Needs" approach to SEND. (ISOS Partnership, 2015)

Further research by ISOS examined parental views of SEND services, in particular the experience of parents of pupils educated in Out of County/Independent Non-Maintained Schools (referred to as OOC). Responses were varied but parents generally viewed out of county placement as a last resort and as a result of continuous system failings for their child.

The combination of this research along with national policy development from the Department for Education (DfE) has identified the need to review current provision and devise a new strategy to reshape the special school system in Lincolnshire.

Leaders in education in Lincolnshire have identified that the existing provision is experiencing considerable pressures and questions around sustainability and premises suitability have been raised. These pressures will be examined in detail within the strategy including the unacceptable distances travelled by pupils to school and excessive demand on special school places making the current system unsustainable.

National

Nationally, the numbers of pupils who are identified as having SEND are continuing to significantly increase and needs are becoming more complex. Pupils are being identified as having several different physical, health, social, emotional and educational needs which require a coordinated approach of support and care involving a range of different expertise and services. Access to specialist support and the location of these services are likely to be under pressure as needs and demands increase. It is therefore timely and essential to review arrangements of provision and access to pupils, which will result in redesigning the system of provision for pupils with SEND, to better meet those needs now and to be flexible and responsive enough to deal with future requirements.

Whilst local and national data indicates that there is a need for increasing the number of school places to support pupils with SEND, we must also consider how mainstream schools can be made more accessible so that the right support and access to additional services can be achieved. This will meet the DfE High Needs Strategic Review requirements of collective responsibility and joint accountability; as well as help achieve greater access to a wider curriculum for pupils with SEND.

This will contribute to the objective of preparing more pupils for employment and independent living.

In Spring 2016, NHS England produced "Reducing Distant SEND Placements Report" which considered the sustainability of out of county/long distance placements for children and young people with SEND. It identified the need for a more strategic approach to developing system-wide change, which must be affected through collaboration and a common moral purpose. This report further supports the need to review existing special school provision due to national and local demands.

In March 2017, the Department for Education announced the High Needs Strategic Review, which requires local authorities, alongside schools, to review provision for pupils with SEND in order to ensure that there are sufficient good school places which meet the changing needs of all young people.

The emphasis of the review is one of close collaboration between all schools and providers in producing a strategic plan which delivers sustainable, good quality provision to meet current and future needs, and reflects what parents and pupils want. It is expected that LA's will work with maintained schools, academies, free schools and others to agree how SEND education should be met across their area, including considering the best ways of supporting mainstream schools to meet these needs.

In response to the identified local challenges and national directives, education leaders in Lincolnshire have recognised the need to work more collaboratively to address the main issues impacting on special school provision.

In order to address these issues and accordance with the DfE High Needs Strategic Review, the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy has been co-produced. (See Appendix A)

This strategy will enable Lincolnshire pupils with SEND to access an integrated and collaborative all needs education system which provides excellent education, health care and support interventions.

It will:

"Establish an integrated school system where children and young people get the right health, care and education, in the right place, at the right time, as close as possible to where they live."

The strategic vision of this integrated school system will provide the foundations for:

"Provision without boundaries: where children feel they belong, are respected, hopeful and optimistic about their future."

The strategy seeks to create an integrated education, health and care provision which will:

- a. Provide a local education system in which parents can have confidence that their child's education, health and care needs can be met.
- b. Ensure a sufficient supply of special school places for pupils with SEND.
- c. Provide local community special schools, which can meet the needs of all pupils in their community, by removing the current barriers to access, particularly where schools can only meet the needs of pupils with specific designations of disability.
- d. Reduce the travel time for pupils with SEND by enabling them to attend a special school in their locality.
- e. Develop a system which enables pupils with SEND to access a greater range of mainstream curriculum and experiences.
- f. Increase opportunities for pupils with SEND to transition to a mainstream setting, if this is identified as most appropriate and beneficial.
- g. Support pupils to access education close to their family and their community thus reducing the number of pupils being educated in Out of County placements/Independent Non-Maintained special schools.
- h. Recognise the very specific needs of some pupils with hearing impairments, where parental preference identifies the importance of belonging within a British Sign Language community and support pupils to access these arrangements, where agreed through the SEND process.
- i. Create and enhance relationships between special and mainstream schools so pupils with SEND can remain in mainstream schooling.
- j. Clarify and enhance health interventions across special schools, so all schools can meet the health and therapeutic needs of the pupils in their communities.
- k. Improve opportunities for special and mainstream teaching staff to share best practice, skills and knowledge.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy proposes to develop an integrated system of special education for pupils with SEND, which will meet their education and healthcare needs, as close as possible to home. Through significant capital investment, special schools would be enhanced to meet the needs of pupils with all needs and designations of disability (with exceptions identified in the strategy) and to create increased capacity to meet the growing demand. Schools will require investment to ensure they have the appropriate resources to meet all needs and that staff are sufficiently skilled to meet pupil need.

Key Features of the Proposed Model

- A collaborative system of special schools that can meet most special educational needs and disabilities (excluding hearing impaired) by being designated "all needs" and taking pupils of all ages.
- A new special school to meet the demand for places. This will be a Free School, and will be part of the collaborative special school system. The new school is likely to be based in Lincoln as this is where demand and need is greatest.
- Four localities within the county which provide school places for SEND which are local and more easily accessible to pupils in terms of distance and travel time.
- Equal access to resources, expertise and support across the county for pupils with SEND in mainstream and special schools, which supports pupils to access or remain on roll at whichever school best meets their need (special or mainstream).
- New satellite units, accessible from each locality, on mainstream school sites (primary and secondary) which are managed by local special schools and offer transition support for SEND pupils accessing curriculum areas in mainstream or requiring additional support from special schools whilst accessing their school place in mainstream.
- A professional staff development and support network accessible to all schools which can provide shared experience, advice, knowledge, training and support on a full range of special educational needs and disabilities issues and needs.
- Space and facilities which will support education and therapy needs of pupils with complex physical, medical, emotional, social and educational needs in "all needs" schools across Lincolnshire.
- An integrated approach with Health services, to delivering medical, health and therapy support to pupils with SEND.

The proposed model has been agreed with all special school Head Teachers and the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum and fully meets the strategic vision for SEND provision. However, without full and open consultation we cannot fully appreciate the impact this Strategy will have on pupils with SEND and their families.

Consultation

Public consultation for this strategy commenced on Monday 8th January 2018, for 9 weeks ending on 14th March 2018. All interested parties, including all parent/carers of pupils attending special school have been sent a letter outlining the strategy and providing details of the how to contribute to the consultation.

Various summarising documents along with the full strategy and links to the consultation surveys are available via a dedicated LCC website (www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/sendcommunities).

Each special school is hosting its own consultation events and details of these are also available on the website. These events will be led by the individual school Head Teachers and supported by LA Officers. They will provide parents and carers of pupils with SEND and school staff the opportunity to consider the impact the strategy may have on them individually and at school and locality level.

Three further public meetings have been arranged to enable other interested parties to understand how the proposed strategy and model may impact the wider population. In addition, a series of independent consultation events are being hosted by LPCF to give parents and carers the opportunity to discuss the strategy in a more independent environment.

Following this 9 week consultation period, all responses will be considered and formulated. The final Executive Councillor report will be developed and submitted for approval and, if successful, the statutory process for making significant change to both maintained schools and academies will be followed.

Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out??

Yes

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

The risk and impact analysis insofar as it can be determined at this stage is set out in the strategy. The analysis will continue to be developed throughout the consultation process in response to feedback to ensure all interested parties have the opportunity to be considered.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Building Communities of Specialist Provision: A Collaborative Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND in Lincolnshire

Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Consultation Guidance Pack	SEND Project Office
New Vision of Specialist Education Handbook	SEND Project Office
DfE High Needs Strategic Review	SEND Project Office

DfE Guidance - Making Significant Changes to an Open Academy	SEND Project Office
DfE Guidance - Making Prescribed Alterations to LA Maintained Schools	SEND Project Office

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